1662

AN
Expoſtulation
WITH THE
BISHOPS
IN
ENGLAND,

Concerning their Juriſdiction over the Peo-
ple of God, called *QUAKERS*; with a
few wholeſom words of Exhortation and
Advice tending to unite *Them* and
Us in one true Spiritual Worſhip.

FRiends, Conſider that many years are paſſed, wherein God's hand hath eminently appeared in divers over-turns, ſince the former Biſhops were taken away, or did ceaſe to exerciſe that office in their reſpective Dioceſſes, whether becauſe they were diſcountenanced by authority, or for want of their Revenues, or for want of love & faith in Chriſt (whom they ſaid called them to watch over, and feed his Lambs) we ſhall not now determine; though we are [illegible] that is [illegible] perſwaded that the Office of a Biſhop or Overſeer, [illegible] made [illegible] by the Holy Ghoſt, is to watch over the Flock of [illegible] and feed them as well (if not more chiefly) in the moſt [illegible] of [illegible] in the times of greateſt [illegible] for the [illegible] times of Perſecution, [illegible] ordained by the Holy [illegible] Overſeers [illegible]

has

Ghoſt in the Primitive times did watch over their Flocks, when they had neither large Revenues, nor temporal Princes to uphold them, but were under moſt grievous Perſecution: But when men in Authority began to diſlike your Way, and the temporal Power and large Revenues which were annexed to your Offices were taken away, we know not one of the Biſhops that did ſtand in the Power of God, willingly and of a ready mind, to watch over his See; but We the poor Flock, were left to wander or become a prey to ſuch as God did never ſend or ordain to be his Miniſters; who whilſt they were countenanced by Authority, endeavoured with force and cruelty to rule over us, and did feed themſelves with the Fat, and cloath themſelves with the Fleece, but did not feed us the poor ſcattered Sheep, but with their covetouſneſs and cruelty, alienated our minds from them, whilſt in ſincerity we did ſeek the Lord God; And when he ſaw that we were deſolate and forſaken, and none ſought after us, then did he remember the Promiſe that he had made of old, declared by the mouth of his holy Prophet Ezekiel, and did both ſeek and ſearch us out from wandring upon the barren Mountains, and from amongſt the briars and thorns of the wilderneſs, which did tear the wool from off us, and the Lord himſelf did become unto us a Shepherd, and hath gathered us into his Fold, where our ſouls find reſt; and he feedeth us in freſh paſtures, ſo that we have no cauſe at all to turn aſide from following of him, for we are in truth the Sheep of his hands, not at all gathered by your labours, nor by the Prieſts whom ye have ordained and ſent forth; neither hath any one of your Curates ever healed our wounds, nor ſtrengthened us when we were weak and diſeaſed; therefore in Juſtice and Righteouſneſs you cannot claim any Spiritual Juriſdiction over us, nor at all blame us from ſeparating from you, ſeeing you were firſt ſeparate for us; but if you have the mind of Chriſt, you will rejoyce that we meet together in his Name, and obey his Light in our Conſciences, though we follow not you. Read Ezek. 34. Mark 9.38.

But if you object and ſay, you have Spiritual Juriſdiction over us, and may juſtlie blame us for ſeparating from you, becauſe that many of us when we were Infants, were Baptized

zed into your Church, and did enter into Covenant to continue in the ſame, &c.

We anſwer, That then we were not at all capable to know or underſtand the doctrine of your Church, and much leſs of true Faith and Baptiſm, and therefore we could not then enter into any ſuch Covenant as you ſpeak of; but if you ſay, that we did it by our Sureties, who did promiſe and vow in our names: We anſwer, That to no ſuch thing were we then capable of conſenting; therefore you muſt wholly look to the Sureties which your forefathers took; and if they cauſed them to promiſe and vow that which they are in no wiſe able to perform, you may do well to take heed of doing the like to others: And now that we are come to years of diſcretion, till we can ſee your Church in the Life and Power of God, and your Doctrine in all things according to Godlineſs, we cannot for Conſcience ſake joyn with you.

Therefore (Friends) in all your Viſitations; Mind the Apoſtles example, who went forth only to viſit thoſe to whom they had preached the Goſpel, that did believe, and were gathered from the Jews Synagogues and Heathens Temples; and do not you ſtretch your ſelves beyond your line, nor ambitiouſly ſeek to be Lords over US, whom ye have not convinced, nor laboured at all amongſt us; for what have you to do to judge them that are without? Therefore take heed, leſt the Shepherd and Biſhop of our Souls (who doubtleſs hath Sheep which are not of your Folds) do judge you as bold Intruders that would Lord over thoſe of his Heritage, which he never committed to your charge. Therefore receive this advice from Us, who in humility do reſpect the Office of a Biſhop, and can give double honour to thoſe Over-ſeers that rule well, though we cannot give flattering Titles, nor reſpect the perſon of any man; for in ſo doing, our Maker would ſoon take us away.

Acts 16.36.

1 Cor.5.12.

John 10.16.

Job 32. 21, 22.

Prov. 28. 21.

Firſt, Come ye to the Light wherewith Chriſt hath enlightned your Conſciences, that while you ſeek to take the motes out of your brethrens eyes, you may ſee that there be no beams in your own, which may ſo blind you, that you cannot diſcern Tares from Wheat, nor a Wolf from a Lamb. Therefore firſt begin the work of Reformation in your own

Luke 22.25, 26, 27.

hearts and houſholds, till ye be whollie blamleſs as the Stewards of God, &c. according to the Apoſtles Doctrin, 1 Tim. 3. & Tit. 2. 7, 8, 9. and be not ye called Lords, becauſe Chriſt ſaid to his Diſciples, the Princes of the Gentiles exerciſe Lordſhip, and their great Ones exerciſe Authority, but
1 Pet. 5.1,2,3. it ſhall not be ſo amongſt you: So in obedience to Chriſt be ye good examples to the Flock, that you and your Miniſters have convinced to your Way, and to all People, that you may have a good report of them that are without; and be not lifted up with pride, leſt ye fall into reproach, and the ſnare of the Divel.

2. Secondly, That there may not be a Cry of Oppreſſion in the Countrie, Reform your Officers, Prieſts and Curates, until they be everie way blameleſs, as the Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, and ſet them not up meerlie becauſe they have natural parts and humane Learning, but try (if you can) whether they be of God or no, and whether they have received power from on high by the gift of his Spirit, and be made apt to teach or no, before you ſend them forth; ſee whether there be a neceſſity laid upon them to preach the Goſpel; if ſo, then they will do it freelie, as well in time of perſecution, as in time of proſperitie: And if you would have your Courts eſteemed as Spiritual, then let not your Officers in them be carnal earthlie men, but vertuous, impartial, men fearing God and hating covetouſneſs; and let none of your
Read Mat. 23. Prieſts be ſuch as ſay, but do not; nor be called of men Maſters, nor have the chiefeſt ſeats in the Aſſemblies, nor go in long Robes, nor lay heavie burdens upon the People, nor devour Widows houſes, nor for a pretence make long Pray-
Iſa. 56.10,11. ers, nor uſe vain repetitions in their Prayers, as the Heathens, chief Prieſts and Phariſees did, which Chriſt cryed woe againſt; neither let your Prieſts preach for hire, nor your Curates divine for money, which thing the Prophet *Micah* cry-
Micha 3.11,12 ed wo againſt; neither let them be ſuch as *Iſaiah* called gree-
Jude. die dumb Dogs, which can never have enough, but all look to their own way, everie one for his gain from his quarter; neither let them be ſuch as go in the way of Cain, which will envie and perſecute, nor ſuch as go in the way of Balaam for rewards, nor ſuch as will ſell chaff for Wheat, which

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have hearts exerciſed with covetous practices, nor ſuch grievous Wolves as the Apoſtles ſaid will not ſpare the Flock (but even ſue people for wages, whom they do no work for) neither let them be at all Hirelings, for Chriſt ſaid, ſuch care not for the Sheep; but let them be ſuch as do everie way accord with the Primitive pattern; and let none of them be profane ſwearers, nor drunkards, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor fornicators, nor gameſters, nor ſcoffers, nor ſuch as ſpeak lies, and are given to lightneſs and fooliſh jeſting; for how can they that be evil ſpeak good things?

2 Pet.2.14,15.
Act.20.29.
Joh.10.12,13.
Mat.12.34.

3. Thirdly, Reform your people, that one may diſtinguiſh between your Church and the world: ſeparate the precious from the vile, and withdraw from everie brother that walks diſorderlie; and let not your Church be made numerous with unbelievers, nor ſuch eſteemed Members as do live in covetouſneſs, pride, envy, or malice, nor any that is an extortioner, or an oppreſſor of the poor, fatherleſs and widows, nor any that live in gluttonie, drunkenneſs, rioting and exceſs, nor any that be profane ſwearers, lyars, cheaters, and cozeners, nor any which abuſe themſelves with mankind, nor any that be murderers or man-ſlayers, nor any that be adulterers or adultereſſes; becauſe ſuch have no inheritance in the Kingdom of God, nor of Chriſt. And you that profeſs to be Biſhops or Overſeers of the Church, which is his Body; let not any be admitted members, but ſuch as are baptized into it by the Spirit; for if any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt he is none of his, and ſuch will ſcoff like Iſhmael, at the movings of the Spirit in thoſe that are his.

Jer.15.19.
Gal.5.19,20,21.
Eph.5.3,4,5.
1 Cor.6.9,10.
Chapt.12.13.
Rom.8 9.

4. Fourthly, Reform your Worſhip if you can, till it differ neither in matter nor manner, in whole nor in part, from the Apoſtles and primitive Chriſtians Worſhip, and let it not be made vain with the Doctrines, Commandments, Traditions and invented Ceremonies (of men) which will all periſh with the uſing; but worſhip God (who dwelleth not in Temples made with hands) wholly in Spirit and in Truth; if you have received the one, and know the other, you will ſee that no other worſhip beſides the Worſhip in Spirit, is either decent, orderly, or accepted with God.

Mat.15.3,8,9.
Joh.4.23.
Col.2.20,21,22.
Act.7.48.

And when you have ſo reformed your ſelves, your Officers,

Prieſts,

Prieſts and Curates, your People and your Worſhip, till you be both in Word, in Spirit, in Worſhip, & Converſation, one with the Primitive Chriſtians, that men may joyn with you, and not touch an unclean thing; then ſee if we cannot have unity and fellowſhip with you: but in the mean time, let us quietly feed in our green paſtures, and follow Chriſt the Shepherd and Biſhop of our ſouls, who leads us to living Fountains of water; and take heed of curſing us whom the Lord hath bleſſed, leſt it fall upon your own heads; for until you have ſound Doctrine, and the example of a good Converſation, with Chriſtian love and charity, to draw us to a conformity, ye may deſpair of hope to drive us by force and cruelty; for the more of that ye do exerciſe upon us, the more ſhall we be confirmed; and it will alſo manifeſt your Church not to Rev.17.5,6. be the Lambs Wife, but rather a Daughter of that mother of Harlots, that hath drank the blood of the Saints and Martyrs of Jeſus.

Therefore conſider of theſe things, and think not to ſettle your ſelves with threatnings, excommunications, priſons and the like; for by ſuch things ye cannot convince gainſayers, that your way is right, nor at all ſhake them that be in the Truth, though ye may fright Hypocrites, and make them come bending under you for a ſeaſon, till they can get over you; therefore it will be your wiſdom to ſhew your zeal in caſting out the filth from amongſt your ſelves, and ſuch as profeſs your way, and by a vertuous life and wholſom doctrine, ſeek to win ſuch as differ from you: For things are not now as they were thirty years ago in this Nation; for Light is broken forth as the morning, and your ſteps will be Math. 7. 12. marked; therefore wait that God may direct you the right way, to do unto all men as ye would they ſhould do unto you.

The 5th. of the
7th. Month,
1662.

Having ſpoken the Truth in love, We reſt your Friends, deſiring that in love ye may receive and read theſe lines, and do not ſlight that which concerns your peace in them, becauſe they are ſent from us that be in ſcorn called QUAKERS.

JOHN WHITEHEAD.
MARTIN MASON.

LOVE *is a vertue that endures for ever,*
A link of matchleſs jewels none can ſever.
Had I the tongue of men and Angels too,
If Love *were wanting what good could I do?*
Love *far ſurmounts all earthly Diadems,*
Though deckt with pearls, with rubies and with jems;
Love *is the life of all things under th' Sun,*
Love *muſt the Lawrel wear, when all is done.*
Love*'s eye is tender,* Love *does gently draw*
The mind to God, without a penal Law.
Love *thinks no ill,* Love *never did invent,*
Fines præmunire, *Goals nor Baniſhment*
For Innocents, Love *hath no ſpleen nor Gall,*
Love*'s like the Royal Sun;* Love *ſhines on All.*

THE END.

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